

Spring 3-14-2014

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Recommended Citation

Park, Jihye and Kwak, Dae-Hoon, "Key Strains, Anger and Delinquency: The General Strain Theory Test on Sourth Korean Youths From Low-Income Households" (2014). *Graduate Research - Criminal Justice*. Paper 5.
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KEY STRAINS, ANGER AND DELINQUENCY: THE GENERAL STRAIN THEORY TEST ON SOUTH KOREAN YOUTHS FROM LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

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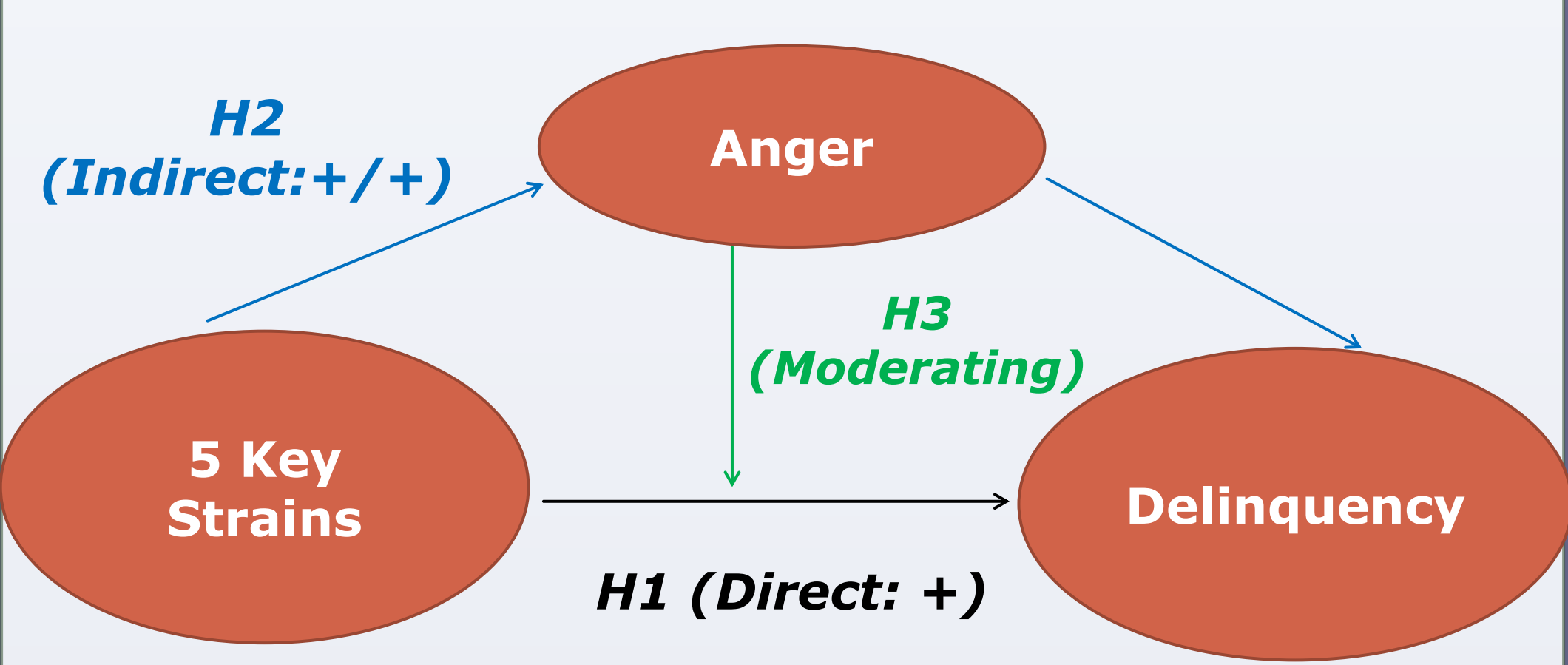
Introduction

- **General Strain Theory (GST)** (Agnew, 1992): Negative relations of strains create unpleasant emotions (e.g., anger and depression), which lead strained people to commit crimes as their coping methods
- Strains are **more likely** to lead to **crimes**, **When**: Seen as “Unjust” (→ Anger), Perceived as high in magnitude, Associated with low social control, and Incentives to use crimes
- Strains are **less likely** to involve in **crimes**, **When**: High level of self-esteem, self-efficacy, parental attachment and etc.
- **Previous studies on GST and Delinquency**
- Negative life events/conflicts from school, family and neighborhood and delinquency (Agnew & White, 1992)
- Key strains, anger (mediating effect) and delinquent behaviors (Moon et al., 2007)
→ Applicability GST in non-western countries and importance of key strains
- Applicability of GST on street youths
→ non-conventional youth groups (Baron, 2004)

Gaps from previous studies

- Most tests within Western countries
→ Needs to examine external validity to other countries
- Failure including/measuring the key strains *except* for Moon et al. 2007
- Mostly examined on conventional school-age population
→ Socially/Economically deprived youths are more likely to experience unpleasant feelings and use criminal methods due to lack of social supports
- **Current Study**: Examining key strains, anger (mediating and moderating effect) and delinquency on South Korean Youths from low-income households

Research Hypotheses



- 5 key strains: Family conflicts, parental punishment, teacher’s punishment, financial strain, and exam-related strain.

Data

- **Korea Youth Panel Survey (KYPS)**
- By National Youth Policy Institute (NYPI)
- National funding longitudinal survey (2003-2008): Changes Korean youths in career development, delinquent behaviors, socio-cultural thoughts and relationships
- Stratified multi-stage cluster sampling: Wave-3 (3,125 participants in 2005)
- **The Current Study : 239 students (F: 132, M: 107)**
→ Below poverty line 1.136,335 Korean won (= \$1,000)

Measurements

- **DV: General Delinquency**
- 19 items (Frequency of delinquency, 0-8)
- **IVs** (# of combining questions/ Alpha value):
- Family Conflicts (3, $\alpha=.63$)
- Parental Punishment (2, $\alpha=.75$)
- Teacher’s Punishment (Binary, Y/N)
- Financial Strain (5, $\alpha=.83$)
- Exam-related Strain (5, $\alpha=.82$)
- **Mediating Variable: Anger** (6, $\alpha=.72$)

Measurements Cont’d

- **Control Variables**:
- Gender (Female/ Male)
- Parental Supervision (9, $\alpha=.91$)
- Attachment to School (4, $\alpha=.83$)
- Problem solving ability (3, $\alpha=.89$)
- Legitimacy of violence (3, $\alpha=.68$)
- Association with delinquent peers (8, $\alpha=.79$)
- **Analytic Strategies**
- OLS Regression

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Gender (M=1 and F=2)	1.55	.5	1.00	2.00
Family Conflict	.00	1.00	-1.67	4.15
Parental Punishment	.00	1.00	-.88	4.15
Teacher's Punishment	1.07	.26	1.00	2.00
Exam-related Strain	.00	1.00	-2.41	2.60
Financial Strain	.00	1.00	-2.64	1.74
Parental Supervision	.00	1.00	-3.85	2.88
School Attachment	.00	1.00	-2.02	2.95
Solving Ability	.00	1.00	-3.19	2.10
Legitimacy of Violence	.00	1.00	-2.59	2.38
Deviant Peers	.00	1.00	-1.46	7.42
Anger	.00	1.00	-3.03	2.38
General Delinquency	1.35	1.57	.00	8.00

	B	β
Family Conflict	.32	.19
Parental Punishment	-.12	.06
Teacher's Punishment	3.3	.65***
Exam-related Strain	-.57	-.24*
Financial Strain	.41	.22

Model 1.

Key strains & Delinquency

	B	β
Family Conflict	.29	.17
Parental Punishment	-.08	-.05
Teacher's Punishment	3.16	.62***
Exam-related Strain	-.6	-.26*
Financial Strain	.38	.21
Anger	.19	.11

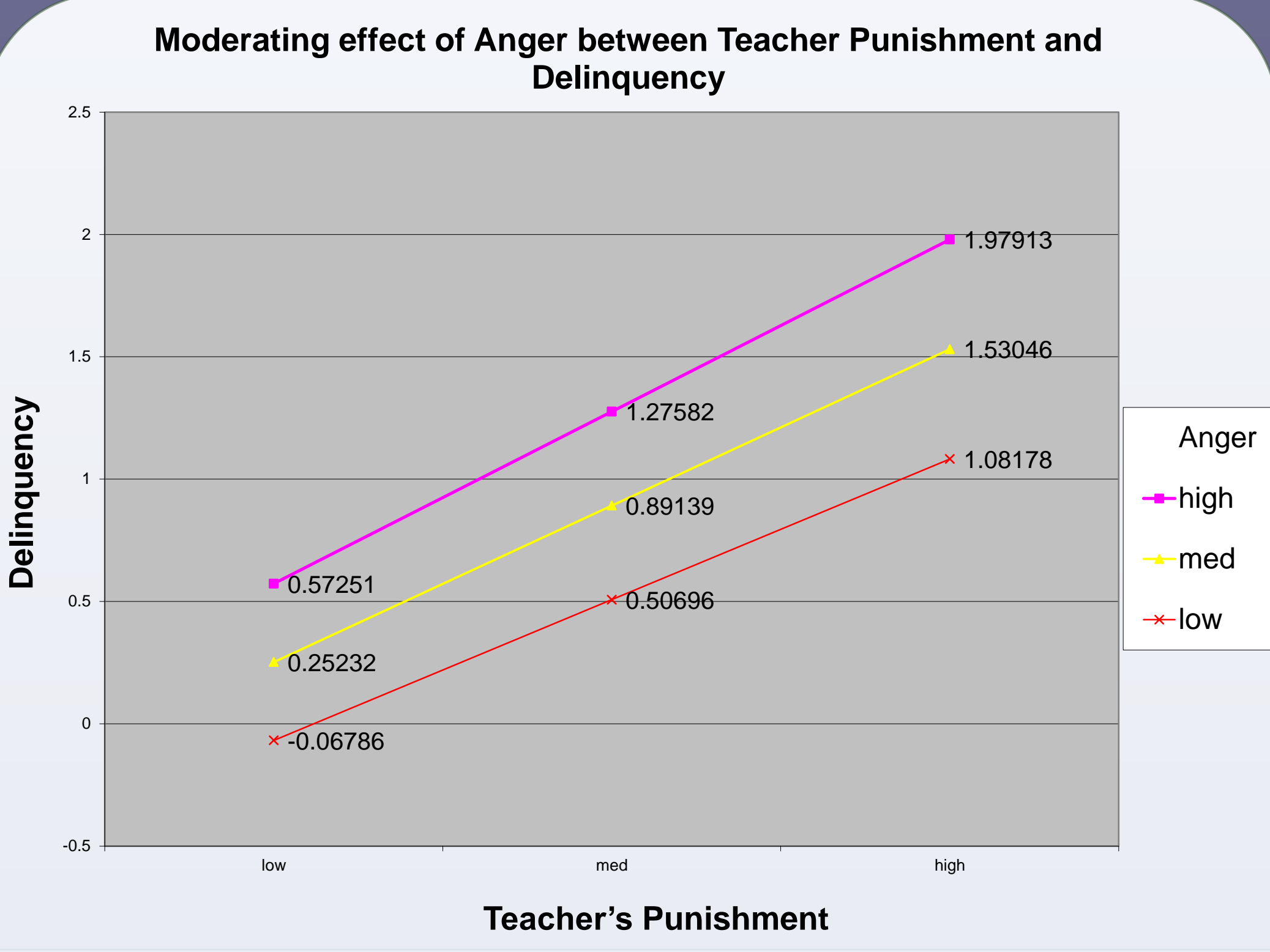
Model 2.

Key strains, Anger & Delinquency

	B	β
Family Conflict	.35	.22
Parental Punishment	-.27	-.17
Teacher's Punishment	2.82	.54***
Exam-related Strain	-.56	-.27
Financial Strain	.31	.18
Anger	.29	.16
Gender	.2	.05
Parental Supervision	-.26	-.18
School Attachment	.1	.07
Legitimacy of Violence	-.02	-.1
Problem Solving Ability	-.13	-.09
Deviant Peers	.02	.00

Model 3.

Key strains, Anger, Control Variables & Delinquency



Discussion and Limitations

- **H1: Teacher’s Punishment***
- Spending more time at school (approx. 12 hrs) than home
- Extremely value on education in South Korea
- Teacher’s physical/ emotional punishment based on students’ performance on exams
- **H1: Negative** significance in Exam-related Strains
- They may need practical job skills
- **H2 & H3: NO Mediating or Moderating Effect of Anger**
- Those socially/economically disadvantaged youths struggle with negative affective states daily basis (e.g., Depression, frustration, and anger)

Limitations

- Analysis: OLS Regression → Count Model
- Measurement of Anger: General anger characteristics → Situational based anger
- Not able to distinguish between:
- ✓ Objective vs. subjective strains
- ✓ Temporary vs. Chronic strains
- ✓ General vs. Specific types of delinquency

Contact to Authors

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